

Agreeing that Tunstall's work has rightly been considered as non-binomial, there are four specific names that drop out and need replacing by specific names of other authors. They are:

(1) *Falco peregrinus* should be *Falco communis* Gmelin, *Syst.Nat.* 1, p. 270, 1788: Europe.

(2) *Falco columbarius aesalon* should be *Falco columbarius alaunicus* Fedinsin, *Comp.Rend.Acad.Sci.Russ.Leningrad*, p. 71, 1927: Sebeshschij Kreis Gouv.Pskpv (Pleskau).

(3) *Anthus spinoletta rubescens* should be *Anthus pensilvanica* (Latham), *Gen.Syn.Bds.Suppl.* 1, p. 287, 1787: Pennsylvania.

(4) *Motacilla cinerea* should be *Motacilla boarula* Linnaeus, *Mant.Plant.*, p. 527, 1771: Sweden.

On the correct name for the Compact Weaver

by CAPT. C. H. B. GRANT and MR. C. W. MACKWORTH-PRAED

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Sclater, *Syst.Av.Aethiop.* 2, p. 744, 1930, uses *Ploceus pachyrhynchus* Reichenow, O.M.1, p. 29, 1893, as the name for this Weaver, and in a footnote states that *Hyphantornis superciliosus* Shelley, *Ibis*, p. 140, 1873, is a homonym of *Ploceus superciliosus* Cretzschmar, *Rupp.Atlas*, p. 24, pl. 15, 1827.

This is not so, as they were originally described under different genera so that both Cretzschmar's and Shelley's name are available. Cretzschmar's *Ploceus superciliosus* is now *Plocepasser superciliosus* and Shelley's *Hyphantornis superciliosa* is *Pachyphantes superciliosus*.

Chapin, "Bds.Belgian Congo," *Bull.Am.Mus.N.H.* 75B, p. 304, 1954, rightly uses Shelley's name but places it in the genus *Ploceëlla*, but the similarities are more superficial than actual and we prefer to leave this Weaver in the genus *Pachyphantes*.

Other homonyms of *Ploceus superciliosus* Cretzschmar, are *Ploceus superciliosus* Des Murs, Lefebvre's *Voy.Abyss.*, p. 110, 1845-50, and *Ploceus superciliosus* Reichenbach, *Zool.Jahrb.* 1, p. 155, 1886.

The Races of *Pytilia melba* (Linnaeus) occurring in the South African Sub-Continent, including a New Race

by MR. P. A. CLANCEY

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The Melba Finch or Green-winged *Pytilia melba* (Linnaeus), 1758: Angola, is a small, and in the male prettily coloured, species of thorn-tangles and thickets with a wide distribution in the lightly wooded savannas of Africa south of the Sahara. Polytypic variation is well-developed, six or seven races being recognized in recent standard works on Ethiopian birds, although between fifteen and eighteen subspecies have been proposed from time to time by various specialists. In South Africa

only the nominate race is believed by workers to occur (see Sclater, *Systema Avium Aethiopicarum*, part ii, 1930, p. 787; Roberts, *Birds of South Africa*, 1940, p. 355; Vincent, *Check List of the Birds of South Africa*, 1952, p. 110; Chapin, *Birds of the Belgian Congo*, part iv, 1954, pp. 509–510; Mackworth-Praed and Grant, *Birds of Eastern and North-Eastern Africa*, 1955, p. 1008, etc.), but study of the adequate material now available in southern African museums shows that such a view is not strictly correct and that in actual fact two racial groups of populations can be conveniently recognized from within the confines of the sub-continent. It has been found that adult males of the populations resident in the dry western and central districts (*i.e.* northern Great Namaqualand, Damaraland and Ovamboland to Bechuanaland, most of Southern Rhodesia and the western parts of the Transvaal) have wings 60–62.5 mm., a usually completely orange-red culmen and the red of the face and throat a deep, dull vermilion, whereas those of the moister eastern lowlands (Natal and Zululand, Swaziland, eastern “lowveld” of the Transvaal, and southern Portuguese East Africa to the Zambesi River) have the face and throat paler and pinker even occasionally peach-coloured. The males of the eastern low-country populations also differ in being smaller (wings 55.5–60 mm.), in having the culmen dark flesh brown, and in being darker dorsally, especially in the grey of the crown and nape. However, females of the two racial groups of populations do not appear to differ in colour and only slightly on mensural grounds.

Fringilla melba Linnaeus was believed by its describer to come from China, but this has been shown to be erroneous, and following Zedlitz, *Journal für Ornithologie*, 1916, p. 31, the correct type-locality is now generally conceded to be Angola. Material from Angolan localities is not available in South African collections at the present time, but through the kindness of Dr. A. L. Rand of the Chicago Natural History Museum, U.S.A., it has been possible to have examples of the two South African races which it is here proposed to differentiate compared with recently taken topotypes. Dr. Rand reports (March, 1956) that material from Damaraland submitted agrees closely with the birds of Angola in the depth of the red of the face and throat, and that examples of the eastern populations from Swaziland and the eastern Transvaal “lowveld” are paler and duller in this respect. It is important to note that Rand was not able to appreciate any difference between the examples from Damaraland and Angola, because Rudolf Neunzig, in a paper dealing with many new forms of Ploceidae, *Zoologischer Anzeiger*, vol. lxxviii, 1928, pp. 107–118, has separated the Damara populations of *P.melba* as an additional race. *P.m.damarensis* Neunzig, 1928: Windhoek, Damaraland, South-West Africa, was separated from the nominate race on the basis of being allegedly paler and duller and rather larger in size. Sclater, in a footnote to p. 787 of his great work on Ethiopian birds, synonymizes *P.m.damarensis* with *P.m.melba*, and the race has been lying forgotten in the synonymy ever since. Following the published findings of Sclater and the more recent observations of Rand, I consider that we should dismiss the claims of Neunzig’s *P.m.damarensis* and recognize *P.m.melba* as being the correct subspecific cognomen of the populations resident in the dry western and central regions of the South African sub-continent. The question of the

name to be applied to the duller faced and small-sized birds of the south-east African populations raises no complication whatever, because none of the numerous names in the various racial synonymies appears to be applicable to them. The well-marked *P.m.grotei* Reichenow, 1919: Kionga, mouth of the Rovuma River, south-eastern Tanganyika Territory, in which the red of the throat in adult males extends over the chest, ranges south to just north of the delta of the Zambesi, south and east of which it intergrades with the two races recognized in this paper. Benson, *Check List of the Birds of Nyasaland*, 1953, p. 79, records that examples of this *Pytilia* from the Fort Johnston area of southern Nyasaland are near to *P.m.grotei*. There is a single male from Port Herald, extreme southern Nyasaland (1st August, 1956), in the collection of the Durban Museum which is close to *P.m.grotei*, while another from Nampini on the Zambesi River, Portuguese East Africa, in the Transvaal Museum is the same as the new subspecies from the low-country of south-eastern Africa, which I propose to segregate below under the name *P.m.thamnophila* mihi, subsp.nov. Rand, in his report, states that three males from northern Bechuanaland (Kabulabula, N'kate, Maun) fall within the range of variation of *P.m.thamnophila* and outside that of the Angola birds (*P.m.melba*), which would suggest that the new race herein described extends its range well up the Zambesi Valley.

For the loan of material and assistance in many directions I am very grateful to the Directors of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria; Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg; Museu Dr. Alvaro de Castro, Lourenço Marques; National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo; and also to Dr. A. L. Rand, Chicago Natural History Museum, U.S.A., for his critical observations on South African material submitted to him for study, and Herr W. Hoesch of Okahandja, South-West Africa, for the collecting of a neatly prepared series of Damaraland *P.m.melba*. To Herr H. E. Wolters I am indebted for valuable assistance with the literature.

While it has not been possible for me to examine material of all the proposed races of *P.melba*, it is estimated that about ten or twelve races of this little finch will ultimately require to be recognized nomenclaturally, two of which occur in the South African sub-continent, the nomenclature, characters and ranges of these being as follows:

1. *Pytilia melba melba* (Linnaeus)

Fringilla melba Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, 10th edition, vol. i, 1758, p. 180: China—error. Type-locality corrected to Angola, *vide* Zedlitz. *Journal für Ornithologie*, 1916, p. 31. Synonym: *Pytilia melba damarensis* R. Neunzig, *Zoologischer Anzeiger*, vol. lxxviii, 1928, p. 109: Windhoek, Damaraland, South-West Africa.

Forehead, malar surfaces and throat deep, dull scarlet in adult male (about SSO-9-12°); crown, nape and sides of neck light grey; mantle golden olive-green. Breast-band golden olive, frequently lightly washed with red; lower breast, sides of the body and flanks dull buffish white finely banded with dark greyish olivaceous. Bill usually wholly orange-red, but occasionally dark brownish flesh basally on upper mandible. The female lacks the red on the head and the golden olive breast-band of the male, the ventral surface being greyish barred with dark olivaceous grey and white.

Wings ♂♂ 60–62.5 (61.2) mm. (8 Damaraland birds measured).

Material: 55.

Range: Angola, the savannas of the southern Belgian Congo west of the range of *P.m.belli* Ogilvie-Grant, 1907: Mokia, Toro, Uganda, and southwestern Tanganyika Territory south through Northern Rhodesia and western Nyasaland to South-West Africa (northern Great Namaqualand, Damaraland, Kaokoveld and Ovamboland), Bechuanaland Protectorate, north-eastern Cape Province, western districts of the Orange Free State, western Transvaal and Southern Rhodesia. Believed to be replaced throughout most of the Zambesi Valley by the following subspecies.

2. *Pytilia melba thamnophila*, subsp.nov.

Scarlet of forehead, malar surfaces and throat in adult male paler and rather more pinkish (usually about SSO–12–12°), occasionally even peach-coloured; grey of crown, nape and sides of neck darker; mantle darker and usually greener. On ventral surface, breast-band usually slightly darker and more sharply defined than in *P.m.melba*, less diffused downwards on to the sides of the body. There is also a tendency, which is quite obvious in series, for the bars on the lower ventral surfaces to be broken up into chains of pearl-like white dots. Bill never wholly orange-red, the basal surface of the upper mandible and the whole culmen being dark flesh brown. Smaller in size. The female of *P.m.thamnophila* does not differ on colour grounds from that of *P.m.melba*.

Wings ♂♂ 55.5–60.0 (57.4) mm. (15 Swaziland and eastern Transvaal "lowveld" birds measured).

Material: 50. Natal, 1; Zululand, 6; Swaziland, 10; eastern Transvaal "lowveld," 18; southern Portuguese East Africa, 15.

Type: ♂, adult. Big Bend, on the Great Usutu River, eastern Swaziland. 8th September, 1955. Collected by Durban Museum Expedition. In the collection of the Durban Museum.

Measurements of the Type: Wing (flattened) 56.5, culmen from base 14.5, tarsus 17, tail 46.5 mm.

Range: Natal (very local), Zululand, Swaziland, the eastern Transvaal "lowveld" and southern Portuguese East Africa north to and apparently well up the valley of the Zambesi River. Intergrades with *P.m.grotei* in Zambezia and with *P.m.melba* to the west of its stated range.

Note: As pointed out above, Rand, in his report, has stated that three males in the collection of the Chicago Natural History Museum from northern Bechuanaland fall within the variation of this new race. A single male in the collection of the Transvaal Museum from Shangombo, Barotseland, collected on 10th August, 1952, is likewise inseparable from topotypical examples of *P.m.thamnophila*. It is upon this information that I have stated under "Range" that this race of *P.melba* extends its distribution well up the valley of the Zambesi.

Special Notice

The next meeting, (joint with the B.O.U.) will be held at the Natural History Museum on Thursday, March 21st, NOT March 19th, as on the cover of the Bulletin.

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